Ontario Ministry of Transportation / Ministère des Transports

Ontario Office for Disability Issues / Office des affaires des personnes handicapées

Transportation For Persons With Disabilities and the Elderly in Metropolitan Toronto

Action for Access

Report of the Joint Review Committee

July 1991

Toronto Transit Commission

Toronto Transit Commission

The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto 1953

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Action for Access

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Executive Summary

Persons with disabilities and the elderly have the same transportation needs as all members of the community. They use public transit to get to work, to shop, to visit friends and family, to enjoy Metropolitan Toronto's cultural and recreational amenities.

It is important to allow persons with disabilities and the elderly the opportunity to participate fully in the community, something that is happening more and more as access to public transit improves.

In Metropolitan Toronto, persons with disabilities and the elderly have come to depend on the Toronto Transit Commission's Wheel-Trans service for this mobility. The result has been a considerable strain and, at times, an impossible demand for Wheel-Trans to meet.

In 1991, Wheel-Trans will need a budget increase of 30 per cent to meet the anticipated increase in demand -- bringing the annual cost to nearly $39-million. And, in spite of this increase, the service will continue to be unable to meet demand.

This leads to barriers for people using wheelchairs and other members of the disabled and elderly community who cannot easily travel by conventional public transit at this time.

Metropolitan Toronto and the Ontario government recognize the need to improve access to public transportation for people with disabilities.

In January 1991, shortly after the Wheel-Trans operating budget was released, Metropolitan Toronto Chairman Alan Tonks, Transportation Minister Ed Philip and Citizenship Minister Elaine Ziemba appointed a task force to look at a range of current issues pertinent to the transportation needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly in Metropolitan Toronto.

Joint Review Committee

This task force, called the Joint Review Committee on Transportation for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly in Metropolitan Toronto, consisted of representatives from user groups, government and labor. It was asked to create a vision for the implementation and operation of transportation services for people with disabilities in Metropolitan Toronto, including the specific steps needed to meet this vision.

The committee approached its task in a spirit of co-operation and partnership. Members met weekly to identify and discuss a variety of themes and issues related to transportation for persons with disabilities, including reviews of conventional public transit. The recommendations in this report represent a common view of specific issues, and provide broad direction to all the groups represented which will help them achieve their goals.

Principles

Several principles formed the basis for the recommendations:

- The Committee reaffirmed the report "Transit Services for Disabled and Elderly Persons - Choices for the Future" as a valuable blueprint for the TTC to follow in meeting the transportation needs of this segment of the community for the next decade. In addition, the Committee is of the view that aspects of "Choices" should be implemented sooner than recommended in the report so as to bring about more accessible travel in Metropolitan Toronto.

- Transportation options recommended by the Joint Review Committee will augment existing Wheel-Trans Services. There is no desire to diminish door-to-door service for persons with disabilities but rather to allow it to be targeted at the people who need it most.

- Given the increasing diversity of transportation needs on the part of persons with disabilities and the elderly, the range of service options available should increase. Greater choice results in more spontaneous travel, provides additional rides that are accessible to a full range of users, and relieves the burden on Wheel-Trans. Integration into the community and equality of opportunity are enhanced by the availability of transportation options. Improved accessibility benefits a wide variety of users beyond persons with disabilities and the elderly -- includes people who are temporarily disabled, people with strollers, and so on.

- Public transportation planning -- for both conventional and special transportation services -- must allow user and community input in a co-operative manner along the lines of the Joint Review Committee. All initiatives to improve accessibility and public convenience should be communicated clearly to all users and the general public to allow full use of these services.

- Improvements to public transportation must consider human rights and equality of opportunity, and must also be done in a fiscally responsible way. The ideal solution is a fully integrated public transportation system eliminating as much as possible the distinction between conventional services and those for people with disabilities.

- Metropolitan Toronto and the Ontario government, through the Ministry of Transportation, will work closely together to introduce new services as quickly as possible. In some cases, this will require legislative, policy and program changes.

Vision

The Committee sees a future public transportation system which promotes the dignity and independence of all the people of Ontario. It will allow equality of access and freedom of choice enabling persons with disabilities and the elderly to take part in the social and economic life of Ontario to the greatest extent possible. Public transportation decisions should be made in an environment of public participation and co-operation with all affected parties working together to meet common goals.

Implementing the Vision

The efforts of the Joint Review Committee were focused in four areas which it regarded as key to implementing the vision. They are: consumer/public participation; service delivery issues; organizational and administrative issues; and, funding issues. The Committee has developed 49 recommendations to address these issues. For each, a series of recommendations, discussion, and time frames for implementation was developed. Key among them is a proposal that an Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation be established to provide policy advice to the Toronto Transit Commission. This body would have representation from consumer and user groups that would reflect a broad cross section of persons with disabilities in Metropolitan Toronto.

The Committee strongly supports enhancing the range of transportation services available to persons with disabilities. The introduction of community bus services, accessible key subway stations, low floor buses and equipping conventional transit with Easier Access features will usher an era of technology that makes the integration of transit service delivery a reality and will relieve the burden on Wheel-Trans enabling it to target its services to those who need it most.

The Committee was of the view that accessible meter-based taxis, under contract with Wheel-Trans would be an effective and expeditious way to get more services on the street to address increasing demand. In the medium to long term, accessible taxis, operated by private taxi firms as part of their full fleets providing services on a non-exclusive basis gives persons with disabilities another transportation option and alleviates existing demand for Wheel-Trans services.

The Committee recommends key changes to the organizational structure of the Toronto Transit Commission to ensure the integrated delivery of transportation services. The Committee also identified a number of funding issues which it recommended that the Province and Metropolitan Toronto jointly examine.

A summary of these recommendations follows.

Summary of Recommendations

Advisory Committee On Accessible Transportation

1. An Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation be created which would report directly to the Commission.
2. The Advisory Committee have representation from consumer and user groups reflecting a broad cross section of persons with disabilities and the elderly in Metropolitan Toronto. Committee members be appointed formally on the basis of qualification and through public advertisement. The Chair of the Advisory Committee be appointed by Metropolitan Toronto from among the Committee members.
3. In the long term the responsibilities and functions of the existing Wheel-Trans Community Committee will be transferred to the Advisory Committee. In addition, existing task forces or work groups of the TTC charged with providing consumer input on other accessibility issues related to TTC operations will be transferred to the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation.

Wheel-Trans Community Committee

4. The primary role of the Wheel-Trans Community Committee be to oversee issues related to eligibility to Wheel-Trans services.
5. Under the direction of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation, appropriate measures be taken to transfer the remaining functions of the Wheel-Trans Community Committee to the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation.

Implementation Task Force for "Choice for the Future"

6. The Toronto Transit Commission create an internal Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future".
7. The Implementation Task Force should include managers of the appropriate TTC departments as well as representation from the Amalgamated Transit Union.
8. The Implementation Task Force be charged with developing an action plan to implement "Choices for the Future" as well as a communications plan to inform elected officials, TTC staff and the general public.
9. With the formation of the internal Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future", the responsibilities of the existing TTC Easier Access Implementation Task Force be transferred to the Implementation Task Force recommended herein.

Introduction of Community Bus Services

10. Four additional demonstrations of community bus services be implemented as set out in the 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget. Contingent upon the successful evaluation of the demonstrations, continue in succeeding years to implement community bus services as advocated in the "Choices for the Future" report.
11. Private sector participation in the funding of these community bus demonstrations be explored to the extent that such participation does not limit the public transportation aspects of the service.
12. The development of community bus routes and service levels take place with full public participation.
13. The long term funding of the community bus service be addressed.

Introduction of Low Floor Vehicle Technology

14. The Toronto Transit Commission complete its assessment of low floor vehicle technology by July of 1991, providing an initial report to the Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future" a well as to the general public.
15. To facilitate the introduction and an operational evaluation of the best available low floor buses a demonstration project should be established along a major route functioning as a "main line" fully integrated transit service as a means of linking the various community bus routes together and provide a service option to the downtown core of Metropolitan Toronto.
16. The TTC acquire a minimum of five low floor buses from their 1992 bus order, at the latest, for use on the "main line" route and consider the acquisition of additional low floor vehicles as part of future bus purchases.
17. The Province encourage an Ontario based manufacturer to pursue a licensing agreement for the Ontario manufacture of a 40 foot low floor bus, in the near term.

Easier Access Features

18. The Ministry of Transportation facilitate the necessary amendments to the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act so as to bring about 90 percent subsidy funding of Easier Access features.
19. The Ministry of Transportation provide enhanced funding for the accelerated renovation and retrofit of key stations which will complement the introduction of community bus services as set out above.
20. The 90 percent subsidy for Easier Access features be applied to the installation of elevators as part of the retrofit and renovation of key stations.

Introduction of Accessible Taxis As Part of the Wheel-Trans Service Delivery

21. The Toronto Transit Commission circulate a request for proposals to Metropolitan Toronto taxi firms, with existing licences, for the provision of accessible, meter-based, taxi services.
22. Ministry of Transportation provide assistance and guidance in the development of a contract document which may be used to secure accessible meter-based taxi services.
23. The Ministry of Transportation absorb the costs associated with the development of a proposal call document.
24. The Ministry of Transportation and Metropolitan Toronto share the costs involved in the adaptation of a taxi driver training course.

Licensing of Accessible Taxis

25. A committee be struck comprised of Metropolitan Toronto, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Citizenship and the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission to undertake discussions to devise approaches, methodologies and responsibilities to achieve the goal of having all taxis fully accessible and available to all persons in the medium to long term.
26. The Ministry of Transportation significantly increase the subsidy provided to taxi operators for the purchase of accessible taxi vehicles. *
27. Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation select from those currently available, a taxi driver training program and recommend that it be used to assist the industry in accommodating passengers with disabilities. If an existing program requires modifications or enhancements Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation share the costs involved in adapting a taxi driver training course to the Metropolitan Toronto scene.

* On May 30, 1991, the Ministry of Transportation announced an increase of $5,000 (100%) in the funding for accessible taxis raising the grant from $5,000 to $10,000.

Introduction of Accessible Vehicles as Part of the Service Delivery of Other Provincially and Municipally Funded Agencies That Provide or Acquire Transportation Services

28. Discussions be initiated to bring about the long-term benefits of introducing accessible vehicles to other provincially and municipally funded agencies that provide or acquire transportation services for clients within Metropolitan Toronto

Equality of Fare Media Between Wheel-Trans and Conventional TTC Services

29. The Toronto Transit Commission discontinue the subscription trip billing and introduce other fare medium including the TTC Metropass.

Taxi Scrip Demonstration

30. Implement a limited taxi scrip demonstration project within a local municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.
31. Metropolitan Toronto, the TTC and the Ministry of Transportation enter into discussions regarding the funding and the administration of the proposed taxi scrip demonstration project.

Cross Boundary Services

32. The Ministry of Transportation initiate a review of cross boundary services.

Service To and From Pearson International Airport

33. Transport Canada establish a medium term goal that bus services receiving authorization to serve Pearson International Airport, do so with fully accessible vehicles.
34. In the interim, Transport Canada provide fully accessible transportation through contracted taxi operators to and from Pearson International Airport.

Organizational Structure of the Toronto Transit Commission To Most Effectively Deliver Public Transportation Services to Persons With Disabilities

35. All planning, marketing, and customer service functions related to services for persons with disabilities and the elderly become part of the appropriate existing TTC departments.
36. A transition team be put into place to effect the transfer of responsibilities of the Wheel-Trans planning, marketing and customer service functions to the appropriate offices of existing departments within the TTC.
37. Wheel-Trans become an operating department only for the operation of door-to-door service involving the scheduling of individual passenger trips.
38. In the short and medium term, community bus services will remain with Wheel-Trans. Once this service is established, community bus services will be fully integrated with conventional transit services.

Enhancement and Replacement of the Wheel-Trans Computer Assisted Reservation, Scheduling and Dispatch System

39. Enhance the existing system in the short term.
40. The computer system ultimately acquired by the Wheel-Trans Department facilitate, among other requirements, the capability of a one day call-in period for service rather than the current four-day call in period.
41. The Toronto Transit Commission expand its search for technology and expertise towards an enhancement and replacement of the computer assisted reservation, scheduling and dispatch system.
42. Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation enter into discussions regarding funding to facilitate computer enhancement so that productivity gains may be realized.

Examination of Alternative Maintenance/Storage Options for Orion II Vehicles

43. The Toronto Transit Commission investigate the cost/benefits of storing Orion II vehicles at a second location within Metropolitan Toronto.
44. The second location be selected from one of the existing Operating Divisions of the Toronto Transit Commission.

Provincial Funding Assistance

45. Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation meet to discuss funding related to the recommendations contained in this report and other areas as necessary.
46. The Province review its funding mechanisms and suggest potential modifications which would encourage funding partners and service providers to consider the provision of public transit service in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget

47. The 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget be accepted as amended.
48. Metropolitan Toronto and the TTC investigate shared-use of the Lakeshore Garage facility in light of the anticipated departure of Gray Coach Lines.
49. Metropolitan Toronto, the TTC and the Ministry of Transportation meet to review the 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget. Wheel-Trans staff will provide any clarification required by the funding partners.

Introduction

Background

The transportation needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly are diverse. Their use and reliance upon public transportation is increasing. This is a positive development in that people with disabilities and the elderly are increasingly integrating themselves with the rest of the community and the Joint Review Committee is of the view that every effort must be made to see this continue. A key to integration is accessible transportation because without mobility, equality of opportunity is severely diminished. In Metropolitan Toronto, persons with disabilities and the elderly have come to rely heavily on the Wheel-Trans operation of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) as their primary means of accessible transportation. This has imposed considerable strain on Wheel-Trans which has experienced difficulty in responding.

The 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget details the need for a 30 per cent increase in expenditures to provide 27 per cent more service in response to a 17 per cent increase in demand. This budget increase brings the annual cost of Wheel-Trans service to nearly $39 million. In spite of the increased expenditure, Wheel-Trans will continue to experience some difficulty in accommodating all requests for service. Of particular concern are the trip refusals experienced by passengers using wheelchairs who face significant barriers to mobility on public transit. There is also the concern that countless others will give up in frustration trying to secure rides on Wheel-Trans and seek alternative means of transportation. The funding partners of the Wheel-Trans operation, Metropolitan Toronto and the Province of Ontario, represented by the Ministry of Transportation, recognize the increased demand. The partners are, however, concerned about the overall direction for provision of public transportation services for persons with disabilities.

Shortly after the 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget was released, the Chairman of Metropolitan Toronto Council, Alan Tonks, Minister of Transportation, Ed Philip and the representatives of the Minister of Citizenship Responsible for Disability Issues, Elaine Ziemba met and agreed that a task force should be struck to look at a range of current issues pertinent to the transportation of persons with disabilities and the elderly in Metropolitan Toronto and recommend innovative, cost effective approaches to the delivery of services.

Purpose

The Joint Review Committee was charged with creating a vision for the implementation and operation of transportation services for persons with disabilities and the elderly in Metropolitan Toronto. In addition to creating a vision, the Committee was asked to set out specific steps that might be undertaken to achieve that vision.

In general terms, the committee was charged with addressing the following tasks in its deliberations:

- Define a vision of the necessary services that should be provided to accommodate the transportation requirements of persons with disabilities and the elderly in Metropolitan Toronto. This should include both public and private services and their interaction and should address the respective roles of the various participants in a broad range of services.

- Based on the vision and the work undertaken in "Choices for the Future" develop and prioritize a family of mutually supportive public transit services which could be undertaken by the TTC to meet the public transit needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

- Develop and prioritize the potential private service options which could be provided to supplement the public service options available to ambulatory persons. This could include accessible taxis, and taxi scrip. Impediments or barriers to program delivery should be defined and appropriate strategies outlined.

- Document the current organizational structure for the delivery of public transit services within the TTC, and recommend any necessary changes to be consistent with the vision and the family of services concept.

- Review and clarify the respective roles of the three principle partners, Metropolitan Toronto, the Province, and the Toronto Transit Commission.

- For Wheel-Trans, review the current service delivery issues and the factors which contribute to these, and outline short, medium and long-term options which would lead to a more effective use of public funds and higher level of customer satisfaction.

- Review the various funding mechanisms and suggest potential modifications which would encourage service providers and funding partners to review the provision of service in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

- Develop a communications strategy to emphasize the partnership assumed by the Province, Metropolitan Toronto, and the Toronto Transit Commission in addressing the issue of transportation for persons with disabilities, and to keep consumers informed of the progress and results of this cooperative effort.

Representation on the Committee

In light of the significant increase proposed in the Wheel-Trans operating budget and the concerns expressed by the disabled community regarding access to Wheel-Trans services, a Joint Review Committee on Transportation for Persons With Disabilities in Metropolitan Toronto was assembled. This Joint Review Committee consisted of representatives from the Wheel-Trans user community (Trans Action Coalition and the Wheel-Trans Community Committee), Metropolitan Toronto (Office of the Chief Administrative Officer), the Toronto Transit Commission (Corporate Planning and Wheel-Trans), the Ministry of Transportation (Transit Office), the Ministry of Citizenship (Office for Disability Issues) and the Amalgamated Transit Union (Local 113).

Approach

The Joint Review Committee brings together all the stakeholders involved in this issue in a spirit of cooperation and partnership. The Committee met weekly to identify and deliberate on a variety of themes and issues related to the provision of transportation for persons with disabilities. The recommendations contained in this report represent a consensus view on individual initiatives as a means of providing broad direction to the respective organizations involved. The Committee took the position that this document would not be an exhaustive analysis of the current issues regarding transportation for persons with disabilities and the elderly in Metropolitan Toronto, rather, it would serve as an action plan on a variety of fronts intended to spur the implementation of initiatives set out in "Choices for the Future" as well as the introduction of new service methods.

The Committee was assisted, on specific issues, by consultants. The fees associated with this assistance were shared equally between Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation.

Principles

Throughout the discussion and deliberation of transportation issues several principles emerged which gave the Committee additional direction and focus forming the basis for its recommendations.

- The Committee reaffirmed the report "Transit Services for Disabled and Elderly Persons - Choices for the Future" as a valuable blueprint for the TTC to follow in meeting the transportation needs of this segment of the community for the next decade. In addition, the Committee is of the view that aspects of "Choices" should be implemented sooner than recommended in the report so as to bring about more accessible travel in Metropolitan Toronto.

- Transportation options recommended by the Joint Review Committee will augment existing Wheel-Trans Services. There is no desire to diminish door-to-door service for persons with disabilities but rather to allow it to be targeted at the people who need it most.

- Given the increasing diversity of transportation needs on the part of persons with disabilities and the elderly, the range of service options available should increase. Greater choice results in more spontaneous travel, provides additional rides that are accessible to a full range of users, and relieves the burden on Wheel-Trans. Integration into the community and equality of opportunity are enhanced by the availability of transportation options. Improved accessibility benefits a wide variety of users beyond persons with disabilities and the elderly -- includes people who are temporarily disabled, people with strollers, and so on.

- Public transportation planning -- for both conventional and special transportation services -- must allow user and community input in a co-operative manner along the lines of the Joint Review Committee. All initiatives to improve accessibility and public convenience should be communicated clearly to all users and the general public to allow full use of these services.

- Improvements to public transportation must consider human rights and equality of opportunity, and must also be done in a fiscally responsible way. The ideal solution is a fully integrated public transportation system eliminating as much as possible the distinction between conventional services and those for people with disabilities.

- Metropolitan Toronto and the Ontario government, through the Ministry of Transportation, will work closely together to introduce new services as quickly as possible. In some cases, this will require legislative, policy and program changes.

A Vision of the Necessary Services

The Committee sees a future public transportation system which promotes the dignity and independence of all the people of Ontario. It will allow equality of access and freedom of choice enabling persons with disabilities and the elderly to take part in the social and economic life of Ontario to the greatest extent possible. Public transportation decisions should be made in an environment of public participation and co-operation with all affected parties working together to meet common goals.

Consumer/Public Participation Issues

Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Background

There are numerous stakeholders involved in the provision and use of public transportation. The technology and services must change to meet the needs of the passenger. The manner in which the stakeholders exchange views and deliberate priorities is changing also. Public participation has a much more significant role in today's political environment. Public participation not only provides an avenue by which interests can be exchanged but also provides an opportunity for the sharing of responsibilities towards a common goal. Public participation facilitates a more efficient and effective allocation of resources in that input towards the decision-making process is continuous. An advisory body to the Toronto Transit Commission with broad representation can be the medium for public participation and a positive conduit for consumer input.

Recommendations

1. An Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation be created which would report directly to the Commission.
2. The Advisory Committee have representation from consumer and user groups reflecting a broad cross section of persons with disabilities and the elderly in Metropolitan Toronto. Committee members be appointed formally on the basis of qualification and through public advertisement. The Chair of the Advisory Committee be appointed by Metropolitan Toronto from among the Committee members.
3. In the long term the responsibilities and functions of the existing Wheel-Trans Community Committee will be transferred to the Advisory Committee. In addition, existing task forces or work groups of the TTC charged with providing consumer input on other accessibility issues related to TTC operations will be transferred to the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation.

Discussion

The Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation should have strong representation on matters pertaining to the Wheel-Trans operation and matters relating to accessibility on the conventional transit system. The intent, however, is not to act as an additional policy unit for the Toronto Transit Commission but to provide a mechanism for gathering consumer/user input and comment on accessibility to the transit system. The Advisory Committee could invite experts to come before it and receive such deputations as are necessary. The Advisory Committee would consider such advice prior to providing its advice to the Commission.

The members of the Joint Review Committee were of the view that an interim Advisory Committee should be established. It would clarify Committee roles and responsibilities, determine what municipal bylaws are affected by the establishment of such a body, set out the processes for appointment of members and address mechanisms for the full transfer of existing Wheel-Trans Community Committee responsibilities. The interim body would consider the full range of issues related to its structure and relationship to the existing Wheel-Trans Community Committee and other bodies. Membership on this interim Advisory Committee should include members of the existing Wheel-Trans Community Committee to provide expertise and continuity. During this interim period, the existing Wheel-Trans Community Committee would continue to be responsible for all issues related to eligibility to Wheel-Trans services.

Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (Continued)

It is envisaged, in the longer term, that a sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation will address issues related to eligibility to Wheel-Trans services. In addition, other bodies created to provide the TTC with advice and input from users/consumers would be rolled into the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation.

Responsibility
The Toronto Transit Commission lead with assistance from Metropolitan Toronto, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Citizenship as appropriate.

Time Frame
The Interim Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation be established by October of 1991 with a permanent Committee struck 18 months later.

The Wheel-Trans Community Committee

Background

The members of the Wheel-Trans Community Committee are appointed by the respective councils of the individual municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto. The Chairman of the Community Committee is appointed, in a similar manner, by Metropolitan Toronto Council. Currently the primary roles of the Wheel-Trans Community Committee include providing policy guidance to the TTC and to oversee specific eligibility requests. In addition to determining eligibility to Wheel-Trans services, the Community Committee also provides comment and feedback on Wheel-Trans operations. To date the Committee's focus has been the door-to-door services of Wheel-Trans. The recommendations related to the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation stem from the view that a broader advisory body can provide valuable guidance to Wheel-Trans/TTC than is currently possible given the pressures before the Wheel-Trans Community Committee.

Recommendation

1. The primary role of Wheel-Trans Community Committee be to oversee issues related to eligibility to Wheel-Trans services.
2. Under the direction of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation, appropriate measures be taken to transfer the remaining functions of the Wheel-Trans Community Committee to the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation.

Discussion

At the present time, the Wheel-Trans Community Committee must address a serious backlog of eligibility requests for Wheel-Trans service. As a result, the Community Committee is not presently in a position to expand its responsibilities to address additional issues relating to accessibility on the conventional transit system. By changing the mandate of the Community Committee to deal with eligibility issues exclusively in the medium term, there is potential to reduce the backlog of requests currently before the Committee.

Responsibility

The Toronto Transit Commission lead with assistance from Metropolitan Toronto, the Ministry of Transportation and the Office of Disability Issues as appropriate.

Time Frame

Direction regarding changes to the structure, roles and responsibilities of the Wheel-Trans Community Committee will originate from the Interim Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation. The Interim Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation will provide this direction within 18 months of its formation.

Service Delivery Issues

Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future"

Background
The report "Transit Services for Persons With Disabilities and the Elderly - Choices for the Future" was adopted by Metropolitan Toronto Council in the Spring of 1990 and endorsed by the Province of Ontario shortly thereafter. "Choices for the Future" represents a comprehensive approach to achieving an integrated, accessible transit system in Metropolitan Toronto. The Joint Review Committee is supportive of the philosophy contained in the "Choices" report.

"Choices for the Future" recommended: all new subway stations be made accessible; 20 key stations be retrofitted with accessibility features over the next 10 years; a new escalator/elevator policy be approved including the development of an escalator improvement implementation strategy; the Easier Access program be initiated including $2 million in additional capital funds over the next 5 years; training of the blind and developmentally disabled in use of the conventional transit system; all future buses be equipped with Easier Access features including a kneeling feature; the TTC test the effectiveness of community-oriented bus routes with a two-year demonstration of two routes in suburban Metropolitan Toronto; a minimum level of accessible bus service be provided in all rapid transit corridors where a parallel arterial road exists; Wheel-Trans service be comparable to the conventional system within 3 years including reducing rejected bookings to 3 percent and call-in period to 24 hours; Wheel-Trans act as feeder to key stations and that regular fixed route buses not be equipped with wheel-chair lifts; and Wheel-Trans pursue innovative means to improve productivity and financial performance including increased use of taxis. In addition, officials of the TTC's Equipment Department are currently searching for the next generation of light rail vehicle suitable for Metropolitan Toronto. It is anticipated that all future purchases of light rail vehicles will be of a low floor design.

To date, Metropolitan Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission have not set forth an estimated timetable or implementation plan to achieve the important objectives set out in the "Choices for the Future" report.

Recommendations
1. The Toronto Transit Commission create an internal Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future".
2. The Implementation Task Force should include managers of the appropriate TTC departments as well as representation from the Amalgamated Transit Union.
3. The Implementation Task Force be charged with developing an action plan to implement "Choices for the Future" as well as a communications plan to inform elected officials, TTC staff and the general public.
4. With the formation of the internal Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future", the responsibilities of the existing TTC Easier Access Implementation Task Force be transferred to the Implementation Task Force recommended herein.

Discussion
While the TTC has not struck an Implementation Task Force to oversee the implementation of "Choices" a number of initiatives contained in "Choices" are currently being implemented or are in the planning stages of implementation. Other initiatives not contained in "Choices" that improve overall accessibility to public transit are also being implemented or are in the planning stages of implementation. Examples of the latter include the TTC's current investigations into low floor buses and light rail vehicles.

Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future" (Continued)

Of concern to the Joint Review Committee is that these initiatives are underway without a central focus or direction within the organization. In addition, information related to the progress of these initiatives is not readily available to the public. To effectively achieve the implementation of "Choices", an Implementation Task Force should be formed so as to provide overall direction and establish a time-line for the implementation of "Choices" in specific short, medium and long term components. The time-line will be complemented by a schedule of costs, particularly in the short to medium time frame (3 - 5 years). The long term for full accessibility, as defined in "Choices", is considered to be the year 2000. An ongoing communications plan should also be undertaken to increase the awareness of the progress of these initiatives.

Responsibility
The Toronto Transit Commission and the Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future".

Time Frame
1. Establishment of an Implementation Task Force by July 1, 1991.
2. Development of an action plan by November 1, 1991.

Introduction of Community Bus Services

Background

Community bus services involve the use of purpose built, small vehicles, such as the Orion II, along a fixed route designed to serve destinations of importance to persons with disabilities and the elderly within a specific community. Metropolitan Toronto, the TTC and the Ministry of Transportation currently participate in a demonstration of community bus service in the Lawrence Manor neighborhood.

Recommendations

1. Four additional demonstrations of community bus services be implemented as set out in the 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget. Contingent upon the successful evaluation of the demonstrations, continue in succeeding years to implement community bus services as advocated in the "Choices for the Future" report.
2. Private sector participation in the funding of these community bus demonstrations be explored to the extent that such participation does not limit the public transportation aspects of the service.
3. The development of community bus routes and service levels take place with full public participation.
4. The long term funding of the community bus service be addressed.

Discussion

The 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget provides for the introduction of four community bus services with the continuation of the Lawrence Manor Community Bus Service, for a total of five routes. The community bus service concept, as indicated in the "Choices for the Future" report, has the potential to alleviate the scheduling/reservation burden currently hampering the level of service provided by Wheel-Trans. For this service to be fully effective, the renovation/retrofit of key stations with elevators and escalators should be accelerated. This may entail potential modifications to the funding mechanism set out for the Easier Access Program. Subway stations constructed in the future, as part of the Let's Move Program for example, will be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Responsibility

The Toronto Transit Commission implement the community bus demonstration services with assistance from the Ministry of Transportation as appropriate. The Office for Disability Issues of the Ministry of Citizenship can assist with the development of awareness materials. Metropolitan Toronto, the TTC and the Ministry of Transportation meet to discuss the long term funding of community bus services.

Time Frame

October 1991 allowing for route design, determination of service levels, acquisition of Orion II vehicles and the development of a promotional package.

Introduction of Low Floor Vehicle Technology

Background
Low floor transit vehicles are the emerging vehicle technology of choice for many European transit systems. Low floor technology is also an emerging technology in North America, however, there are few Canadian manufacturers and currently none are located in Ontario. This Committee is of the view that should an Ontario based manufacturer introduce low floor vehicles, the acceptance and introduction on the part of Ontario transit systems would be greatly enhanced.

Staff of the Toronto Transit Commission's Equipment Department are currently undertaking a review of low floor vehicle technology in both bus and light rail vehicle applications. A number of factors are being considered in the evaluation of various technologies including: suitability to our climate; carrying capacity; configuration of seating, stanchions and floor design offering optimum passenger safety; maneuverability and other operational requirements particular to Metropolitan Toronto; reliability and; degree of accessibility. Given these considerations, the introduction of fully accessible light rail vehicles in Metropolitan Toronto may be seven to ten years away. In the case of low floor buses, engineering developments on the part of an Ontario manufacturer are very promising, however, three to five years are required for further development and testing. Currently, there are two 40 foot low floor buses operating in other centres in North America.

It is proposed that low floor buses would be introduced as a "main line" service component along a major route connecting the various community bus routes to the downtown Metropolitan Toronto Area.

Recommendations
1. The Toronto Transit Commission complete its assessment of low floor vehicle technology by July of 1991, providing an initial report to the Implementation Task Force for "Choices for the Future" as well as to the general public.
2. To facilitate the introduction and an operational evaluation of the best available low floor buses, a demonstration project should be established along Yonge Street functioning as a "main line" fully integrated transit service as a means of linking the various community bus routes together and provide a service option to the downtown core of Metropolitan Toronto.
3. The TTC acquire a minimum of five low floor buses from their 1992 bus order, at the latest, for use on the "main line" route and consider the acquisition of additional low floor vehicles as part of future bus purchases.
4. The Province encourage an Ontario based manufacturer to pursue a licensing agreement for the Ontario manufacture of 40 foot low floor buses, in the near term.

Discussion
The Committee is of the view that a demonstration of low floor vehicles on selected routes within Metropolitan Toronto is necessary to assess the operational characteristics of a vehicle used to provide a fully integrated and accessible transit services. In addition, a demonstration project provides an opportunity to evaluate the technology itself. Service management strategies integrating existing Wheel-Trans services with routes served by low floor buses may be developed as well via a demonstration project of this kind. A demonstration project involving low floor bus also sends a positive signal to the community indicating this vehicle technology may be introduced to Metropolitan Toronto and that such a service is consistent with the spirit of "Choices", namely to provide a mix of service options for persons with disabilities and the elderly. The Committee recognizes, however, that the TTC has not had the opportunity to identify a low floor bus of choice and that those used in the demonstration project may involve vehicles of another type. Careful planning and consideration during the development, design and promotion of the demonstration project will ensure the number of vehicles is kept to a minimum.

Introduction of Low Floor Vehicle Technology (Continued)

The "main line" component would be marketed and promoted as an accessible fully integrated public transit service and as one component of the broader family of service options available to persons with disabilities. In addition, this demonstration would determine the extent to which persons with disabilities are prepared to use accessible services in the interest of more spontaneous travel.

The research and development in bus technology taking place in Ontario is very promising and has the potential of introducing a low floor bus that produces significantly reduced impact on the environment. The technology involved is not without risk in that it is dependent on technological advancement in key areas. To promote the availability of various low floor vehicle technologies the Joint Review Committee encourages the Province assist in bringing about an additional manufacturer of 40 foot low floor buses in Ontario.

Responsibility
With respect to a demonstration of low floor buses the Toronto Transit Commission lead with assistance from the Ministry of Transportation as appropriate. The Ministry of Transportation, on behalf of the Province, explore the possibility of manufacturing an existing low floor bus, under licence, in Ontario. The Ministry of Citizenship Office for Disability Issues, assist in the development of a promotional package for the introduction of integrated transit services, possibly, in part by the advent of low floor vehicle technology.

Time Frame
The TTC complete its assessment of low floor vehicle technology by July 1, 1991.
The TTC introduce low buses into service by May 1, 1992.

Easier Access Features

Background
Since 1981 the Ministry of Transportation has provided a 75 percent subsidy towards features identified to improve accessibility to conventional transit services for frail, elderly and ambulatory disabled persons. In 1987, an Inter-ministerial Task Force was established with consumer representation to identify features including operational, promotional, and educational techniques, which would make conventional transit more accessible. The Task Force identified over 130 accessibility improvements including: additional grab rails on buses; additional lighting on stairs and under seats; improved signs; public address system improvements; kneeling capability on buses and; increased use of escalators. The Task Force also identified related initiatives in the areas of community planning, marketing and training which would further improve awareness, convenience and accessibility for client groups. The accessibility improvements identified by the Task Force have come to be known as Easier Access features. Demonstration projects of Easier Access features, funded at 90 percent, are underway in St. Catharines, Belleville, Sudbury, Hamilton, Ottawa-Carleton, Metropolitan Toronto and GO Transit.

"Choices for the Future" recognized the value of Easier Access features as one of the strategies for improving overall accessibility of transit.

Recommendations
1. The Ministry of Transportation facilitate the necessary amendments to the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act so as to bring about 90 percent subsidy funding of Easier Access features.
2. The Ministry of Transportation provide enhanced funding for the accelerated renovation and retrofit of key stations which will complement the introduction of community bus services as set out above.
3. The 90 percent subsidy for Easier Access features be applied to the installation of elevators as part of the retrofit and renovation of key stations.

Discussion
Easier Access will assist in containing the expansion of more costly specialized transit services. Specialized services can then be targeted towards serving those who, due to the nature of their disability are unable to board conventional transit. For conventional services, Easier Access will ensure efficient use of resources that are better equipped to serve broad community needs. Increased transportation opportunities, achieved through the implementation of Easier Access, will support the objectives of independent community living and integration into society for persons with disabilities and the elderly .

The 90 per cent Provincial subsidy for the installation of elevators should coincide with an anticipated Easier Access Program and it should be made available for a minimum of 3 years, commencing late in 1991. Elevators installed during this period of time should be eligible for the 90 per cent subsidy.

Responsibility
The Ministry of Transportation.

Time Frame
Introduce legislative amendment by September of 1991 in time for the fall session of the Legislature.

The Introduction of Accessible Taxis as Part of Wheel-Trans Service Delivery

Background
Currently 188 municipalities in Ontario licence taxi operators. Most of the taxi operators in these communities use conventional motor vehicles or limousines to provide transportation services. Consequently, persons using heavy motorized wheelchairs or scooters, or persons not able to transfer from a mobility device, or enter a standard vehicle with dignity, as is the case with many seniors, are unable to use this door-to-door service. Accessible taxis provide an alternative method of transportation that is supported by many diverse consumer groups. Accessible taxis have been a demonstration program in Ontario since 1987. Under this program, a licensed taxi operator is provided with $ 10,000 capital incentive grant per wheelchair accessible vehicle.* The vehicle placed into service must be fully integrated with other taxi operations and not as a dedicated service solely restricted to persons with disabilities. To date some 30 municipalities throughout the province have participated in the program. Currently, Richmond Hill, Markham, Mississauga, Brampton, Pickering and Newmarket have accessible taxi demonstration programs in place.

Recommendations
1. The Toronto Transit Commission circulate a request for proposals to Metropolitan Toronto taxi firms, with existing licences, for the provision of accessible, meter-based, taxi services.
2. Ministry of Transportation provide assistance and guidance in the development of a contract document which may be used to secure accessible meter-based taxi services.
3. The Ministry of Transportation absorb the costs associated with the development of a proposal call document.
4. The Ministry of Transportation and Metropolitan Toronto share the costs involved in the adaptation of a taxi driver training course.

Discussion
The Joint Review Committee believes the introduction of accessible taxi services in Metropolitan Toronto would provide persons with disabilities and the elderly with an alternative form of transportation that can be brought about relatively quickly. To achieve this the Committee recommends the TTC circulate a request for proposals, as soon as possible, to Metro Toronto taxi firms, currently holding valid licenses issued by the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission, requesting tendered bids for the provision of accessible, meter-based, taxi services to supplement existing Wheel-Trans operations. The contract established between the service provider and the TTC can, among other issues, address a schedule for vehicle acquisition, driver training, hours of operation, private versus public transit activity, and so on.

To expedite the introduction of this service option, the following activities are required on the part of the TTC: the development of a proposal call; liaising with the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission; the review of several driver training courses and their suitability to the TTC and the Metro Taxi industry; meeting the requirements of various other TTC departments regarding this option.

There are a number of issues that must be carefully addressed before and during contract tendering for accessible taxis. These include, in particular, driver sensitivity training. The Ministry of Transportation will assist the TTC on matters of this kind drawing from the experience of other municipalities that have introduced accessible taxis. With respect to driver training, several training packages exist in the industry that may be suitable for Metropolitan Toronto.

Responsibility
Toronto Transit Commission lead with assistance from the Ministry of Transportation where appropriate.

Time Frame
November 1, 1991, allowing for preparation of contract documents, proposal call and tendering process.

* On May 30, 1991, the Ministry of Transportation announced an increase of $5,000 (100%) in the funding for accessible taxis raising the grant from $5,000 to $10,000.

Licensing of Accessible Taxis

Background

As was indicated previously, accessible taxis provide an alternative method of transportation for persons with motorized wheelchairs, scooters or other forms of mobility devices. Accessible taxis have been a demonstration program in Ontario since 1987. During that time, 30 municipalities throughout the Province have participated in the program. Their introduction into Metropolitan Toronto has been problematic in that past discussions with the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission (MLC) has, however, recently considered approaches to the introduction of accessible taxis which are more acceptable and are based on principles of integration and accessibility. Any proposal that would segregate disabled persons is not considered acceptable and in the Committee's view, could be in violation of existing Ontario human rights legislation.

Recommendations

1. A committee comprised of representatives from Metropolitan Toronto, the Ministry of Transportation, the Office for Disability Issues of the Ministry of Citizenship and the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission be struck to undertake discussions to devise approaches, methodologies and responsibilities to achieve the goal of having all taxis fully accessible and available to all persons in the medium to long term.
2. The Ministry of Transportation significantly increase the subsidy provided to taxi operators for the purchase of accessible taxi vehicles.
3. Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation select from those currently available, a taxi driver training program and recommend that it be used to assist the industry in accommodating passengers with disabilities. If an existing program requires modifications or enhancements Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation share the costs involved in adapting a taxi driver training course to the Metropolitan Toronto scene.

Discussion

Several training programs are currently available on the market. It may be appropriate to review this material for its suitability to the Metropolitan Toronto situation and refinements made accordingly. Assistance on the part of the Ministry of Skills Development may prove advantageous in this area.

Responsibility

Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation.

Time Frame

Initiate discussions by July 1991 and a report of findings be prepared no later than one year later.

* On May 30, 1991, the Ministry of Transportation announced an increase of $5,000 (100%) in the funding for accessible taxis raising the grant from $5,000 to $10,000.

Introduction of Accessible Vehicles As Part of the Service Delivery of Other Provincially and Municipally Funded Agencies That Provide or Acquire Transportation Within Metropolitan Toronto

Background
If public transportation is viewed as a means of social support, in addition to the role of facilitating mobility, the Committee recognizes the benefits of introducing accessible taxis and other accessible vehicles to other provincially and municipally funded agencies involved in the provision of transportation services for persons with disabilities and the elderly within Metropolitan Toronto. The ministries of Community and Social Services and Health provide grants and assistance to a multitude of agencies, many of which include a transportation component.

Recommendation
1. Discussions be initiated to bring about the long-term benefits of introducing accessible vehicles to other provincially and municipally funded agencies that provide or acquire transportation services for clients within Metropolitan Toronto.

Discussion
Metropolitan Toronto, in the administration of assistance and welfare programs may find it advantageous to secure accessible taxi operations to enhance the service options it may make available to clients. These accessible vehicles may be a cost effective alternative worthy of consideration. This initiative would promote integrated use of transportation services and facilitate greater intergovernmental/interministerial cooperation complemented by the more effective use of resources and limited public funds.

Responsibility
Metropolitan Toronto take the lead with support from Ministry of Transportation. In addition, a role exists for the Ministries of Community and Social Services and Health.

Time Frame
Discussions be initiated by September 1, 1991 with a report of findings prepared one year later.

Equality of Fare Media Between Wheel-Trans and Conventional TTC Services

Background
Currently single trip fares (cash/tickets) are identical to that of conventional transit. There is however, a $45 per month subscription pass available for subscription trip customers. These customers are invoiced monthly by the TTC Finance Branch. Phasing out of the subscription pass and the introduction of a TTC Metropass for Wheel-Trans customers would facilitate choice on the part of the customer, depending on their preference for fare payment, i.e. cash fare, ticket/tokens or Metropass.

Recommendation
1. The Toronto Transit Commission discontinue the subscription trip billing and introduce other fare medium including the TTC Metropass.

Discussion
A single policy for all TTC services would be consistent with the recommendations contained in the "Choices for the Future" report and allow ambulatory Wheel-Trans passengers to use alternate transit services such as community bus, conventional services provided through low floor vehicles or conventional buses equipped with easier access features and eventually an accessible subway system.

There are numerous technical and logistical issues to be resolved before a Metropass for Wheel-Trans passengers can be introduced. These issues include; establishing the cash value and number of trips the pass holds; issuance procedures; location of an accessible photo site for persons with disabilities; makeup of the pass itself; and, the administration of contracted services to ensure the integrity of the fare reconciliation system.

Responsibility
The Toronto Transit Commission with assistance from the Ministry of Transportation as appropriate.

Time Frame
Discontinue the subscription trip billing and introduce a new fare medium, preferably the Metropass, effective January 1, 1992.

Taxi Scrip Demonstration

Background
Taxi scrip would entail providing direct subsidies to Wheel-Trans registrants/customers in order that they may book their trips themselves, with a taxi operator (under contract to the TTC) and pay the service provider directly. A committee of Metropolitan Toronto Council has been studying user side subsidy issues and Wheel-Trans strategic policy processes have recommended the introduction of scrip as part of a broader range of services for persons with disabilities. In addition, scrip programs have been implemented in several major Canadian centres. Should a demonstration project be undertaken, a specific municipality of Metropolitan Toronto should be selected and a monthly limit placed on the gross cost of taxi cab trips taken on a per registrant basis.

Recommendations
1. Implement a limited taxi scrip demonstration project within a local municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.
2. Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation enter into discussions regarding the funding and the administration of the proposed taxi scrip demonstration project.

Discussion
The Committee was of the view a taxi scrip, as part of the broader family of services and as a concept on its own may have benefits that warrants evaluation through a demonstration project.

The provision of user side assistance to individuals using public transportation has not yet been examined extensively by the Province of Ontario. Currently some social service programs provide such assistance to clients requiring transportation services. These uses are usually considered on a case by case basis. Some jurisdictions outside Ontario have introduced a system to provide taxi scrip to registrants of their specialized transit services as an alternative service delivery option. Some municipalities in Ontario have used a similar concept to provide transportation services to certain groups (e.g. senior citizens) at times when public transit does not operate.

Many provincial partners may potentially be involved in the full delivery of the concept of a taxi scrip system. These include the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Skills Development, Education, Health, and Citizenship (Office of Disability Issues) as well as Metropolitan Toronto Department of Community Services.

A number of issues would have to be addressed prior to the introduction of taxi scrip, including: procedures to minimize abuse; responsibility for the program (i.e. the TTC or Metropolitan Toronto); liaising with the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission; meeting the requirements of various Toronto Transit Commission or Metropolitan Toronto Departments regarding implementation; and, the development of a proposal call document. The 1991 Wheel-Trans budget did not include funds for the development of a scrip system.

Responsibility
The Toronto Transit Commission lead with assistance from the Ministry of Transportation and Metropolitan Toronto and other provincial agencies as appropriate.

Time Frame
Implement a taxi scrip demonstration project by April 1, 1992.

Cross Boundary Services

Background
One of the challenges of providing transit services in the Greater Toronto Area is the work which must be undertaken to ensure transit patrons can move conveniently across municipal boundaries. These challenges face providers of specialized transit services as well as conventional transit.

Recommendation
1. The Ministry of Transportation initiate a review of cross boundary services.

Discussion
Persons with disabilities and the elderly using transit systems experience considerable difficulty when crossing municipal boundaries. A number of critical issues arise that hamper the freer movement across municipal boundaries. The Committee recommends the issue of cross boundary services be investigated immediately to identify current impediments and possible options to address cross boundary services, giving consideration to: demographics in the GTA; legislative provisions and inter-jurisdictional issues as well as the roles and responsibilities of the TTC, GO Transit and other municipal transit services. Fare integration and service coordination initiatives between GO Transit and the TTC may provide valuable experience and may have application to transportation operations for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

The cross boundary issue for specialized transit services is as complicated, if not more complicated, than conventional transit. Given the complexity of the situation, this issue deserves immediate attention to expedite resolution. As a minimum, initiatives towards enhancing the coordination and integration of cross boundary services for persons with disabilities should be of similar scope as those undertaken and proposed for conventional services.

Responsibility
Ministry of Transportation to take the lead with assistance from the Toronto Transit Commission, GO Transit and other affected transit systems.

Time Frame
The review be initiated by September 1, 1991 with a report of findings prepared one year later.

Service To and From Pearson International Airport

Background
Wheel-Trans provides service to and from Pearson International Airport on a charter basis. Often Orion II vehicles wait for extended periods of time when passengers arrive late due to a delayed flight or congestion within the airport resulting in slower traveller processing. Although the TTC recovers the full cost of providing services beyond the Metropolitan Toronto boundary, trips are lost due to a vehicle being tied up for an inordinate period of time when serving Pearson Airport.

Recommendations
1. Transport Canada establish a medium term goal that bus services receiving authorization to serve Pearson International Airport, do so with fully accessible vehicles.
2. In the interim, Transport Canada provide fully accessible transportation through contracted taxi operators to and from Pearson International Airport.

Discussion
Wheel-Trans has no intention of discontinuing service to Pearson International Airport. However, the current situation causes significant operational difficulties for Wheel-Trans.

Responsibility
Ministry of Transportation lead with assistance from the Toronto Transit Commission.

Time Frame
The Ministry of Transportation initiate discussions with Transport Canada by June 1, 1991.

Organizational and Administrative Issues

Organizational Structure of the Toronto Transit Commission to Most Effectively Deliver Public Transportation Services to Persons With Disabilities

Background

The Toronto Transit Commission currently separates all aspects of transportation services for persons with disabilities into a separate department known as Wheel-Trans. This Department is currently responsible for all services ranging from general office administration to vehicle operation. This separation of responsibility means that transportation services are not planned in a comprehensive way to ensure all persons have equal access as far as is reasonably possible. This may be seen as a perpetuation of the attitude that persons with disabilities are different and must be kept separate from other transit patrons.

Recommendations

1. All planning, marketing, and customer service functions related to transportation services for persons with disabilities become part of the appropriate existing department within the TTC.
2. A transition team be put into place to effect the transfer of responsibilities of the Wheel-Trans planning, marketing and customer service functions to the appropriate existing departments within the TTC.
3. Wheel-Trans become an operating department only for the operation of Wheel-Trans door-to-door service involving the scheduling of individual passenger trips.
4. In the short and medium term, community bus services will remain with Wheel-Trans. Once this service is established, community bus services will be fully integrated with conventional transit services.

Discussion

Integration of certain Wheel-Trans functions within the TTC will assist with the longer term objective of a broadened TTC corporate philosophy which views transit for persons with disabilities and the elderly as part of the overall transportation service and not something that should be provided separately from conventional services. The role of Wheel-Trans will be to focus on the efficient and effective delivery of door-to-door services. It is the view of the Committee that the Ontario transit industry should adopt an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of conventional and services for persons with disabilities and that the TTC should provide leadership in this area. This is based on the premise that a wide variety of transportation services are required to the meet the needs of a multitude of users throughout Ontario.

It is acknowledged that the full integration of Wheel-Trans and community bus operations with the TTC will result in increased operating and capital costs in that the maintenance/storage of Orion II vehicles at multiple locations will require modifications to garage storage and maintenance facilities, additional training for mechanics, and driver training. The Committee recognizes that it will likely be necessary to negotiate changes to the existing collective agreement pertaining to conventional TTC services to facilitate the additional operator duties associated with the delivery of effective community bus services, i.e. passenger assistance from door-to-door. In addition, it is also acknowledged that where community bus vehicles are located, specialized operator training relating to services for persons with disabilities will also be required.

Responsibility

The Toronto Transit Commission, in consultation with the Amalgamated Transit Union, Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation.

Time Frame

1. Establishment of a transition team by October 1, 1991.
2. Completion of transition and new organizational structure in place by January 1 , 1993.

Enhancement and Replacement of the Wheel-Trans Computer Assisted Reservation, Scheduling and Dispatch System

Background
The reservation and trip scheduling computer system is the heart of the Wheel-Trans door-to-door operation. As indicated by the system's name it is a computer-assisted, manually based means of scheduling that also provides statistical analysis, report generation and information processing functions. The overall design of the system has not been reviewed since it was introduced more than 7 years ago and enhancements have been "piecemeal" in nature. The system, as it exists today, cannot accommodate the recent significant increase in service demand and does not have the necessary flexibility to deal with cancellations and other changes to schedules. The net effect is hampered productivity, less than efficient use of limited resources and long lead times for booking.

Recommendations
1. Enhance the existing system in the short term.
2. The new computer system ultimately acquired by Wheel-Trans facilitate, among other requirements, the capability for a one day call-in period for service rather than the current four-day call in period.
3. The Toronto Transit Commission expand its search for technology and expertise towards an enhancement and replacement of the computer assisted reservation, scheduling and dispatch system.
4. Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation enter into discussions regarding funding to facilitate computer enhancement so that productivity gains may be realized.

Discussion
Technological improvements from advanced systems such as "Trapeze", may provide solutions to these and other computer related constraints. The Committee recommends the TTC expand its search for technology and expertise towards an "overhaul" of the computer reservation and scheduling system. The costs associated with the computer system enhancement may be offset by potential productivity and service level gains.

Management Services staff of the Toronto Transit Commission are currently addressing the computer system needs of Wheel-Trans and have identified service enhancements to the existing system necessary to continue doing business in the short term. In the long term, Wheel-Trans strategic planning efforts have recommended replacement of the existing computer system. Management Services of the TTC is in the process of obtaining the necessary approvals for a Computer Systems Plan to implement this recommendation. In addition, funding is required to expedite this process so as bring on-line a computer system that will improve productivity.

Responsibility
Toronto Transit Commission lead with assistance from Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation as appropriate.

Time Frame
Short-term enhancements to the system be undertaken in fiscal 1991 and 1992. A new computer scheduling system be in place no later than April 1, 1994.

Examination of Alternative Maintenance/Storage Options for Wheel-Trans Orion II Vehicles

Background
Maintenance and storage of community bus and Wheel-Trans vehicles at an additional TTC transit facility may alleviate dead-head time and facilitate a zonal type of scheduling system. The benefits of a second storage location may include, a more effective use of the vehicle fleet for community bus operations and enhanced responsiveness to reservations and/or changes to trips for Wheel-Trans services.

Recommendations
1. The Toronto Transit Commission investigate the cost/benefits of storing community bus and Wheel-Trans vehicles at a second location within Metropolitan Toronto.
2. The second location be selected from one of the existing Operating Divisions of the Toronto Transit Commission.

Discussion
The potential advantages gained through storage of the fleet at a second location may be offset by the need for additional equipment to service the fleet, possible relocation of conventional vehicles at the selected facility to make way for Wheel-Trans vehicles and the implications this may have on existing routes in that Operating Division. In addition, maintenance expertise currently situated in one location would have to reside in two locations with staffing and training implications. The sale of Gray Coach has resulted in additional capacity at the Lakeshore garage facility, a factor this examination may want to consider. In all, the Committee feels the opportunities for increased responsiveness and productivity associated with a second storage/maintenance facility warrants further study.

Responsibility
TTC lead with assistance from the Ministry of Transportation and the Amalgamated Transit Union as appropriate.

Time Frame
Investigation to be complete by the fall of 1991, capital funds be allocated for the target facility in 1992 with appropriate accommodations undertaken in 1993.

Funding Issues

Provincial Funding Assistance

Background
In 1979 the Province of Ontario introduced a funding program for transportation services for persons with disabilities. The focus of the program was on persons with severe disabilities. Currently some 120 municipalities provide transportation services for persons with disabilities. The Province of Ontario contributed approximately $32 million in 1989 towards the capital and operating costs of these services.

There is some concern that by maintaining two funding programs, the Province encourages separate services and skews decision making regarding alternate organizational and operating arrangements which could improve service and cause it to be provided in an integrated fashion where possible.

Recommendations
1. Metropolitan Toronto and the Ministry of Transportation meet to discuss funding recommendations contained in this report and other areas as necessary.
2. The Province review its funding mechanisms and suggest potential modifications which would encourage funding partners and service providers to consider the provision of public transit service in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Discussion
The Committee recognizes that any such review of funding assistance must consider the implications of potential changes on a province-wide basis. The Committee is also concerned that any changes to funding ensuring persons with disabilities have access to services that meet a range of special needs.

The intent behind the recommendations indicated above is to: facilitate the timely introduction of new services or service enhancements; provide flexibility in addressing municipal operating requirements; rationalize existing capital and operating subsidy policies; and, consider a range of other objectives which may have an impact on public transportation, i.e. the environment and social policy issues.

Responsibility
Ministry of Transportation to take the lead on this issue.

Time Frame
Initiate review by October 1991.

1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget

Background
The 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget was released in November of last year. The original Budget of $ 40 million represents a $ 9.24 million (30 percent) increase over 1990. Much of the increase in service will be provided through sedan, station wagon and taxi contracts. More recent ridership forecasts undertaken by Wheel-Trans indicated that 1991 ridership is anticipated to be 1,248,000 million rather than 1,314,000 million. This ridership demand will require reduced hours of service accounting for savings of $773,000. An estimated $1.07 million in savings is anticipated due to lower costs for contracted services. These savings are offset by unbudgeted expenditures of $ 610,000 resulting in a net savings of $1,241,000. The revised total operating budget for 1991 is $38.7 million.

The Lakeshore Garage facility was shared by the Wheel-Trans and Gray Coach Lines operations. Gray Coach Lines is no longer controlled by the TTC and therefore Gray Coach Lines will relocate to another facility in May of 1991.

Recommendations
1. The 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget be accepted as amended.
2. Metropolitan Toronto and the TTC investigate shared-use of the Lakeshore Garage facility in light of the anticipated departure of Gray Coach.
3. Metropolitan Toronto, the TTC and the Ministry of Transportation meet to review the 1991 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget. Wheel-Trans staff will provide any clarification required by the funding partners.

Discussion
The 1991 Operating Budget demonstrates a strong commitment on the part of Wheel-Trans to make effective use of taxi operations as indicated by significant expenditure increases over 1990. Due to arrangements prior to 1989, when Wheel-Trans assumed full responsibility for the Orion II bus operation, several unique cost accounting principles, which were appropriate to the previous contracted services, have remained in place in the Wheel-Trans budgeting process. For example, the administration area includes costs associated with operating personnel which tends to distort the proportion of the administrative costs vis-a-vis the entire budget. These principles have contributed to an increase in administrative expenditures.

The Lakeshore Garage will experience excess capacity with the departure of Gray Coach Lines resulting in additional overhead costs for Wheel-Trans. An option for the TTC might be to identify other tenants for the facility until such time as it may require the additional capacity.

Responsibility
Metropolitan Toronto and the TTC.

Time Frame
The Ministry of Transportation, Metropolitan Toronto and the TTC as appropriate to each recommendation commencing July 1, 1991.